

# THE ALMA RECORD.

VOL. XL—NO. 40

ALMA, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 2, 1919

WHOLE NUMBER 2076

## 'NOT GUILTY' THE VERDICT

John F. Brennan Free Man  
After a Year in Prison  
Awaiting Trial.

## JURY WAS OUT TWO HOURS

Pleas of Attorneys to Jury Took Over  
Eight Hours on Monday.

Just at noon Tuesday, after two hours of deliberation in the jury room, the jury in the Brennan case, reported that it had reached a verdict and had found that John F. Brennan was not guilty of the murder of Beatrice Epler, the sixteen-year-old Alma girl, whose body was found on Grover avenue, a few rods from her home on the morning of September 5, 1917, after she had been strangled at the home of Mrs. Anna Gilson, according to the testimony which sent Albert Eichorn to Marquette prison for life.

When court convened Tuesday morning at 8:30 Circuit Judge E. J. Moinet gave his charge to the jury. In the charge he went over the evidence very carefully. He charged the jury that only two verdicts were possible in the case, that they must either find Brennan not guilty or else guilty of murder in the first degree. A verdict in a lesser degree could not be brought in he stated.

He told the jury that it must be satisfied that Brennan was at the Gilson home and that it must also be satisfied that the murder was committed there or a verdict of not guilty must be returned. He also stated that while the defense had endeavored to impeach the testimony of Mrs. Gilson, that the jury was the sole judge in the matter.

Following the rendering of the verdict, it became known that within a very few minutes after retiring the jury was in agreement on the verdict to be given, and that the evidence was, however, gone over very carefully before the report was made.

Brennan received the verdict calmly, only a slight smile appearing on his features, as the foreman of the jury spoke the words that made him a free man, after a year spent in prison awaiting trial. He left St. Johns Tuesday evening with his family for his home in Flint, to spend New Year's with his wife and kiddies in their home.

John F. Brennan was placed on the stand on Thursday to testify in his own behalf, and during the afternoon and evening his story was a denial that he was ever at the Gilson home, where the murder is said to have taken place; denied that he ever knew Beatrice Epler, denied that he had ever accosted the girl on the streets of Alma; denied that he had left the show grounds on the night of the murder; denied that he drank that evening with Benjamin Kelch at the Alma Hotel; denied that he knew Mrs. Johnson; denied that he knew Treva Sanderson, and knowledge of the Epler girl's murder.

His story was told in great detail. He told of his show being in Leslie the week of August 13, and how he was in Alma that day, Tuesday, to secure a license for his show to appear in Alma, and that he was in Leslie the balance of the week and not in Alma on the 14, one of the days when Mrs. John Blank claimed to have seen him at the Gilson home in Alma. When asked by his attorney if he was at the Gilson home on the 13th, 14th, and 15th of that month he said "No."

He told of meeting Mrs. Todd, at that time a housekeeper at the Seaver hotel in Ithaca, later in the month when the show was in Ithaca. He stated that he also met Eichorn at that time, meeting him when he was with Mrs. Todd.

On Friday Brennan was on the stand under cross-examination, but held up well under the volleys of questions hurled at him by Ora L. Smith, prosecutor, and Kelly S. Searl, special prosecutor.

J. F. Sartor, Jr., was called Friday by the defense to establish that there was no restaurant in or near the Redman block at the time that Brennan was said to have accosted the Epler girl on East Superior street, near a restaurant in the Redman block as had been stated.

Saturday Mrs. Brennan was called to the stand to testify in behalf of her husband. Her testimony was not of any great importance, as it dwelt for the greater part, on events after the murder. Her appearance on the stand for her husband created considerable impression with the jury, it was evident. When she appeared in court she was accompanied by her three children, who went to their father's side in the court room, so that the jury might be impressed as much as possible from their appearance.

Character witnesses were introduced for Brennan Saturday and three men from Isabella county appeared as character witnesses for Mrs. Gilson, but witnesses of a different sort, as they told the court that they would not believe Mrs. Gilson under oath. They were Garfield Merrill, Walter Mercer and Luther Stiver, all farmers. The defense rested its case at this point Saturday, and the prosecution immediately took

up the rebuttal. Prosecutor Ora L. Smith, Deputy Arthur Murphy, Mrs. S. H. Epler, mother of the murdered girl, and Marcus Pollasky were called in the effort to offset the damage to the people's case by the admission of Ora L. Smith, when placed on the stand by the defense, regarding statements made by Beaudry. They were asked if Beaudry had told them all or part of the story before the reward was offered. Not one of them was fully able to establish this or to refute the insinuations of the defense that Beaudry had "framed" the evidence to secure the reward money. Brennan was also called as a rebuttal witness before court adjourned for Sunday.

Monday forenoon a new surprise was sprung in the case when Kelly S. Searl, special prosecutor, asked the court to allow the prosecution to call Clinton and Howard Pierson, young lads who had assisted Brennan last year in distributing show bills in St. Johns, as he wanted them to testify as he had just learned that they claimed Brennan wore a salt and pepper suit and white shoes then. Brennan had denied ever owning such clothes after Mrs. Baker and Benj. Kelch had testified that he had worn them.

In view of the importance of such testimony the judge stated that he would allow it to be given. A motion to adjourn until Tuesday was taken under advisement, but the court resumed Monday afternoon, when the arguments to the jury were taken up by the attorneys, all five of whom made pleas to the jury.

The pleas of the five attorneys took up two of the four-hour sessions Monday and it was not until 10 p. m. that court adjourned for the day, to be resumed early Tuesday morning, when Judge Moinet made his charge to the jury.

Ora L. Smith, prosecuting attorney, opened the arguments, defending the attitude of Mrs. Gilson, pointing to the threats which she asserted were made against her if she told what she knew, and which would account for her withholding for three months, the story of the crime. He also denied the attempts of the defense to belittle the issue and insinuate that the case was a "frame-up."

Attorney Goggin opened the arguments for the defense, dubbing David Beaudry as a perjurer, and charging

(Continued on page five)

## EXPECTED TO ASK FOR A NEW TRIAL

In All Probability New Trial  
Will Be Asked, Stated One  
of Eichorn's Attorneys.

Seen at his offices yesterday, Chas. H. Goggin, one of the attorneys in the Albert Eichorn case and the John F. Brennan case, stated that in all probability a new trial would be asked for Albert Eichorn, now serving a life sentence at Marquette, following his conviction for the murder of Beatrice Epler of this city.

While he would not state positively that the attorneys for Eichorn were contemplating asking for a new trial for him, the trend of the conversation was such as to indicate that the matter has probably already been decided, and it would not be surprising if a new trial was asked for at any time in the near future. Discussion of a new trial for Eichorn first came up during the Brennan case.

When asked on what grounds a new trial would be asked for, if one was sought, Mr. Goggin stated that Eichorn felt that he could not secure a fair trial in Gratiot county, indicating that this would be one of the basic reasons to be used if a new trial is sought.

He also gave out that if the new trial was asked that the ground of new evidence in the case would also play a part. No inkling of the evidence, which he termed new, was given during the conversation.

COMMUNICATION

Rumors to the effect that he was asked to resign by Mayor King, and other rumors which have been afloat regarding the work of Dr. T. J. Carney, as health officer here have had an effect which has not been at all justified by conditions. In justice to himself in this connection the following letter to Dr. Carney is published:

State Board of Health  
Michigan  
Lansing, Mich., Dec. 14, 1918  
Dr. T. J. Carney,  
Alma, Mich.

My Dear Doctor:  
Your communication of the 13th inst. received. I am very sorry indeed to know of your withdrawal from the health department of your city. I considered you one of the few competent health officers of the state and feel that the department is losing a good, conscientious supporter from active duty.

I would be very glad to see you and talk these matters over with you at your first opportunity.  
Very truly yours,  
R. M. Olin, Secretary.

TAX NOTICE

The state, county and school taxes are now due, and payable at the council room, city hall.  
D. W. Adams, City Treasurer.  
Alma, Mich., Dec. 12, 1918. 74-4-c

Eat Mida Bakery bread and pastry and be happy the whole year through.

## PURSE GRABBED FROM GIRL'S ARM

Pocketbook Taken From Girl on  
Tuesday Evening on Alma  
Street.

## MISS UDELE THE VICTIM

Followed from Depot by Two Men,  
One of Whom Grabbed Her  
Handbag.

Miss Udele, youngest daughter of Arthur Udele living on Wright avenue, was robbed Tuesday night while returning to her home from the depot, her pocketbook being snatched from her arm within a short distance of Superior street, after she had turned north on Wright avenue.

Miss Udele arrived in the city from Ohio on the late Ann Arbor train. She started to walk home, and was accompanied by a woman who lived near her. As they left the depot two young men trailed along behind them, until they reached Superior street, where the men passed them. As Miss Udele and her companion reached a point near Smith's coal office on Wright avenue she noticed the two young men ahead of them. They had stopped and one of them was apparently attempting to tie up his shoe.

Having a suit case to carry in one hand, Miss Udele was carrying her pocketbook suspended over her other arm, by an attached chain, and as she attempted to pass the men one of them snatched the pocketbook, and both fled towards the railroad tracks just to the west.

When she reached home officers were summoned by telephone, but the young lady was unable to give a description of either of the men. It is believed, however, that the men are local characters, as they seemed to know Miss Udele, or at least where she lived. This is indicated by the fact that they passed her on the street and then when they reached Wright avenue, waited until she approached. The officers are still at sea concerning the affair.

There were about ten dollars in the pocketbook, besides stamps, postal cards, and some other articles.

## GOOD LETTER

Private Guy Gongwer Writes Inter-  
esting Letter From France.

Private Guy S. Gongwer of this city, with the 119th field artillery in France, has written a very interesting letter to his parents in this city, which The Record is glad to publish. Private Gongwer's work at the front has been highly spoken of by his officers, who have recommended him for the Distinguished Service Cross. The letter follows:

On Active Service with the  
American Expeditionary  
Force, Dec. 11, 1918  
Dear Father and Mother:  
Suppose you are having some nice cold weather in Michigan about now, but all we are having is rain every day.

Just what we have been afraid of is now happening to us. War is over and we have been in this little place nearly a month. We have to drill, have reviews, and lectures on how to give first aid and a lot of things like that. I think when you go through a deal like we had our last whir, we pretty nearly know how to put on a bandage.

We were on the front 42 days at a stretch and had some narrow escapes. On Sept. 29th I had my big day as you will see by the recommend I am sending. I never expected to come out alive, but never got a scratch. They shelled our aid station, killing some fifteen or twenty men and wounding several. Then is when I had to work as I was the only man that wasn't hurt. Lieut. Shaw also got hit in the leg. I had started to get one man and when a few feet away a shell blew him all to pieces. I tell you it makes you a little bit nervous, but the only thing to do was stay by them and take a chance.

But now it is all over and we may soon be on our way home, I hope. We do not know when it will be, but are pretty anxious to leave here. I have seen all of Europe I care to and will be mighty glad when I get home again.

Wish I could have been home for Xmas this year, it would be some reason to celebrate. Thousands of homes are going to be very sad indeed this year but how lucky we are. Sister getting along fine again and I soon to be coming home. I was mighty sick at one time for a few days from some gas but soon got over that. When the armistice was signed and we started back this way, I had all the war I wanted and another fellow and I were all ready to go to the hospital. We figured we had been too lucky and had better get away for awhile but the war ended and we had a very rapid recovery.

Well, will quit as I have no news. Hold up on the box as I am all set now and have enough to last until I get home.

Guy,  
119 F. A., Med. Dept.  
A. E. F.

Smoke the best, Wanigas—64-4f

GOING BACK  
Howard Lake Will Resume His Place  
at the Alma Post Office.

Howard Lake, who left his position as assistant postmaster about three months ago to go into the United States army as a private in the ranks with a view of going to Europe if needed to defend the honor of his country, will resume his place at the local office within the next few days, according to an announcement made to a Record reporter Monday by V. P. Cash, postmaster.

The friends of Mr. Lake, who have been greeting him on the streets since his return from camp several days ago, will be pleased to see him back at his old place at the postoffice.

## PRIVATE STITT TELLS OF WORK

Alma Boy in France Writes  
Long Letter Telling of His  
Experiences.

## HE WAS SHELL SHOCKED

Cut Off From Company by a Barrage  
and Stayed in a Shell  
Hole.

## FACULTY RECITAL

The faculty of the music department of Alma college will give a vocal and instrumental recital in the college chapel, Wednesday evening, January 2, 8 o'clock. The public is cordially invited.

## ALMA COLLEGE TRUSTEE IS DEAD

William Winton, Former Gratiot  
Boy, Died at His Home in  
New Jersey.

William Winton, trustee of Alma college and a former Gratiot county lad, died at his home at Verona, N. J., Friday according to word which has been received here. He recently suffered from a complete nervous breakdown from which he did not recover.

Mr. Winton spent his boyhood days in Ithaca, where he was well known and highly regarded. He was a graduate of the Ithaca high school and then attended Alma college from which he graduated with honors in 1904.

After graduating from Alma college he returned to Ithaca, where he entered the insurance business with Arthur Pino, remaining there about a year before he left for the east. At the time of his death he was the superintendent of agencies for the Mutual Life Insurance company of Newark, N. J.

Some years ago he was elected a trustee of Alma college and at the time of his death was still a member of the board and a member of two of its most important committees, the endowment and agricultural committees.

His grandparents were among the earliest settlers in Gratiot county. In 1910 he was married to Miss Florence Baldwin of Chicago, who with her two sons survive, as do his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Winton, now residents of Seattle, Wash., and one sister, Mrs. Beulah Sickles.

## MINTYRE WRITES

Corp. Arthur J. McIntyre Tells of His  
Work Behind the Front Lines.

The following letter from Corporal Arthur J. McIntyre from France should prove interesting to Record readers as it tells something of the work that the soldiers are required to do behind the front line trenches, work that goes to make that at the front a success:

Aix les Bains, France,  
11-13-18

Dear Mother—  
How is everyone at home? Well the war is over. No one has been killed in our company. One of the cooks, Horton, however, working in one of the kitchens near the front, was hit in the shoulder by a piece of shrapnel and was taken to a hospital. I was never in any great danger. At Pansey, near Metz, I was with a detail and could hear the Boche shells whistle and could see them burst a few rods from us. After a few minutes we could hear bang, bang, and the whistle went in the opposite direction. Then we knew they were American guns and the shells from the Hun guns could no longer be seen.

We left New York July 21; arrived at Liverpool July 31; crossed the south of England by rail to Southampton. After a day or so we embarked one evening for Le Havre, a French seaport. About August 2, we left for San Cerve, a town in central France. After three weeks the company moved to Toul. Here we split up and went in detachments along the Lorraine front. For the most part we had charge of construction work, or switchboard stations. The only danger was from Hun artillery. We were not close enough for machine gun fire but German aeroplanes were a danger. I witnessed several air battles. The roar of guns was constant. The search lights swept the skies at night.

Our detachment left Toul the latter part of August and stopped at Andilly, a little town near the front. After a week I was put in charge of a detail to do guard duty at a large dugout. Later only three were left on guard. This was the 4th army headquarters, during the big drive in the Lorraine sector when we released 159 square miles of territory from the Hun.

We three had varied duties—once it was to guard the entrances and allow only officers ranking "general" to pass. I was on guard the day General Pershing, himself, visited the dugout. Duty at this dugout was a great experience. Officers of rank were constantly about. A 2d lieutenant was no more important than a buck private, because there

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## BIG ORDERS

Republic Motor Truck Company Inc.  
Has Had Big Orders Recently.

Within the past few weeks the Republic Motor Truck Company Inc. has received some big orders for trucks, among them being an order from the New York fire department for fourteen, with a prospect of 150 more at an early date.

The demand for the trucks of the local concern is shown by some of the other recent orders which include 65 for Denver, 50 for Baltimore, 25 for Lynchburg, 25 for Detroit, 50 for Tokyo, Japan, 19 for Wellington, New Zealand, 20 for Shanghai, China, 16 for Harbin, China, and 40 for Valparaiso, Chile.

## NIGHT SCHOOL

On Monday evening, January 6, new classes will be organized in the night school conducted at the high school, providing there are a sufficient number present to enter these new classes. English, French, shorthand, bookkeeping and typewriting will be offered, any two of these subjects may be pursued by each student. Tuition \$2.50 per month. The night school classes were organized the latter part of October with an enrollment of 40 but the attendance, due to several causes, has been small during the past few weeks. It is the desire of the board of education to continue this work if the demand warrants it. All persons desiring this work should enroll at the high school, Monday evening, January 6, at 7:30.

## MAUN PROMOTED

W. E. Maun has been appointed chief assistant to G. R. Wilber, director of purchases for the Republic Motor Truck company, Alma, succeeding C. V. Marshall. Mr. Maun will have charge of production purchases. Mr. Maun is well qualified for his new position, having for a long period been head of the service, claim and stock maintenance department of the Western Electric company, Chicago, and later service manager for the L. Markle company, Studebaker distributors in the Windy City. In joining the Republic Motor Truck company he took up production problems and graduated into the purchasing department until chosen for his present position.

## SEEKING TO RAISE TELEPHONE RATES

Michigan State Telephone Co.  
to Ask Railroad Commis-  
sion for Permission.

It has been announced by the Michigan State Telephone company that it will make application for a raise in telephone rates to the Michigan Railroad Commission on January 7. The announcement of the company states that it will ask for authority to alter, by standardizing and making more nearly adequate, the schedule of rates, rentals and practices now in effect in all local exchanges of the company in the state, except for the Detroit exchange.

The proposed standard schedule of rates shows six classes for the towns and cities of various size, Alma being included in the third group of cities with a population of 3,501 to 10,000.

The schedules show a cost for one party business service of \$36.00 compared with the present price of \$18.00 per year. The residence service shows a cost of \$24.00 as compared with \$12.00 at the present time. Farm line service will also be in for a good raise.

The announcement of the company that it will ask permission to raise the rates to this extent is exciting considerable comment among the business men of the city, who do not feel that such an increase in rates is needed.

## CHURCH OF CHRIST REVIVALS

A series of special evangelistic services will begin Sunday evening at the Church of Christ under the direction of J. S. Raun, minister, assisted by Evangelist C. M. Smithson of Illinois and also by C. R. May as leader of song. J. S. Raun will begin the campaign by speaking Sunday and Monday nights and on Tuesday Evangelist Smithson will arrive and take charge. Evangelist Smithson made a very favorable impression when here for a few days in November and will be heard with delight. A feature of the meetings will be a large chorus choir under the direction of Mr. May, who has proved himself a real leader in handling this chorus of young people. Sunday night this chorus rendered a Christmas cantata in the presence of an audience that packed the building to the doors. All seats are free and the public is cordially invited to enjoy these services.

## ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of stockholders of the First State Bank of Alma, Mich., for the election of directors and the transaction of any other business that may come before the meeting, will be held at the office of said bank on Tuesday evening, the 14th day of January, 1919. Polls open from 7:30 to 8:30 p. m.

Carl H. Washburn, Cashier.

W. A. Brunner spent New Year's in Howard City.

Wanigas at Brunner's—64-4f

## RECOMMENDED FOR HONORS

Private Guy S. Gongwer of this  
City Showed Great Bravery  
in Action.

## WAS IN ARGONNE DISTRICT

His Officers Ask that Distinguished  
Service Cross Be Conferred  
Upon Him.

Private Guy Gongwer, medical department of the 119th field artillery, has been recommended for the distinguished service cross, the highest honor in the U. S. Army, is the word which has been received within the past few days from this former Alma boy, who has been seeing extensive service on the battle fields of France. A copy of the recommendation made in behalf of Private Gongwer for the distinguished service cross, made by Murdock M. Kerr, Major M. C. U. S. A., follows:

From: Commanding Officer, Sanitary Detachment, 119th Field Artillery. To: C. G. 32nd Division. (Through Military Channels). Subject: Recommendation, Distinguished Service Cross, Private Guy S. Gongwer, Medical Dept., 119th Field Artillery.

1. Private Guy S. Gongwer, No. 4117, Sanitary Detachment, 119th Field Artillery, is recommended for the award of the Distinguished Service Cross, in view of his conduct during the following military operations:

(a) September 20th, 1918, 5:00 p. m. and throughout the night.  
(b) One-half kilometer south of Nantillois. (Argonne sector).  
(c) Private Guy Gongwer was serving as First Aid man under Lieutenant Milton Shaw at First Aid Station at First Battalion, 119th Field Artillery, where he rendered valuable service and continued to do so under heavy enemy shell fire. Shells were dropping and exploding only a few feet from the Aid Station.

(d) Rendering First Aid to the wounded at the First Aid Station, 119th Field Artillery, where fragments of high explosive shells dropped all around him, but this did not deter him from rendering unhesitatingly the best that was in him to the many wounded soldiers brought in from his own and other organizations. Private Gongwer has on many other occasions depicted himself in a manner which brought commendation for his acts of coolness and bravery.

(e) These recommendations are based upon the valuable service rendered and upon the fearless and intelligent manner in which Private Gongwer at all times renders First Aid at the scene of these operations. The terrific shelling of this place did not in the least prevent Private Gongwer from caring for the wounded and preparing the injured for littering back to the roadside for ambulance transportation.

(f) These facts were ascertained from Lieut. Milton Shaw, Surgeon in charge of the First Bn., 119th F. A. Aid Station, where Private Gongwer served as a corps man.

2. I am of the opinion that Private Guy S. Gongwer, Med. Dept., 119th F. A., has so distinguished himself upon this and other occasions that we are justified in recommending the above reward.

Murdock M. Kerr,  
Major M. C. U. S. A.  
Comdg. Det.

Private Gongwer went into the army with the outbreak of the war, and soon after was in France seeing service. The work that he has done is shown by the recommendation for the highest honor that can be awarded a soldier in the United States army. That he has been a soldier whom not only his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Gongwer, but all of Alma, his home city, can honor, is shown by these recommendations.

## DIED SUDDENLY

Mrs. Esther R. Carney Died Suddenly  
at Home of Son Yesterday.

Mrs. Esther R. Carney, aged 87 years, died suddenly at the home of her son, Dr. Thomas J. Carney, on West Superior street, just before dinner time on New Year's Day. She had just started to go to the dinner table when the end came.

She was born at Watkins, N. Y., and lived there until fifteen years ago, when she made her home with her son, Thomas. Her husband, an officer in the Civil war, died in 1881 leaving her with five young children. For years she, with the aid of her sons, ran the farm. She was the daughter of John Fossett, for many years recognized as an arbitrator among the Indians of upper New York.

She is survived by four sons and one daughter, Frank Carney, geologist for the National Oil Refinery company of Arkansas, Dr. Thomas J. Carney, Charles of Watkins, N. Y., Dr. E. J. Durand, and Miss Elizabeth Carney, social worker at Petoskey. She is also survived by two brothers.

The body is being taken to Watkins, N. Y., for burial. The funeral services will be held in that city Saturday afternoon.

Wanigas at Brunner's—64-4f